Student Transport Policy

Barwon Valley School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people and has zero tolerance for child abuse.

(Child Safe Standards)

Purpose:
The purpose of this policy document is to promote, enhance and ultimately ensure the safety of Barwon Valley School students whilst they are transported to and from school each day and to promote the efficiency of bus services to support the provision of an effective bus service.

Aims:
To ensure that students travelling to and from our school by buses do so safely, and in a manner consistent with Department of Education and Training (DET) policies and regulations, including the DET document *Students with Disabilities Transport Program, Policy and Procedures, June 2018 and the Emergency Management Operational Guidelines January 2015.*To ensure transport issues are dealt with effectively and efficiently.

Implementation:
General
Students attending government specialist schools are eligible to receive free transport *assistance* (bus travel) to the nearest specialist school for which they meet the entry criteria which includes:

Criteria 1 – Be eligible for the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD)
The PSD supports the education of a defined population of students with moderate to severe disabilities in Victorian government schools by providing schools with additional resources.
For further information regarding this program, please refer to the PSD guidelines.
www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/disabilities.aspx.
Criteria 2 – Reside in the Designated Transport Area (DTA) of the school attended.
A DTA has been established for each government specialist school to ensure the efficient provision of transport services. To be eligible for transport assistance, students must reside within the DTA of the specialist school attended. Parents/guardians may choose to enrol their child at any specialist school outside of their DTA however this precludes the student from accessing any transport assistance.
Criteria 3 – Be enrolled for three or more days per week.
Students must be enrolled at a specialist school for three or more days per week to be eligible for transport assistance.
Criteria 4 – Be of school age and reside in Victoria.
School is compulsory for all Victorian children aged between six and 17 years of age. For the purposes of the SDTP, students are eligible for assistance if they are aged between five and 18 years of age at the time of their application and reside in Victoria.

The Principal is responsible for all elements associated with bus travel by students, including liaison with the bus personnel and parents, and delegates the day-to-day operations to the Assistant Principal with responsibility for Student Transport.

Students are supported by a supervisor and a driver on each bus.

Roles and Responsibilities:
Bus Company
Ensure safe passage of all travellers.
Ensure an appropriate vehicle is used at all times.

Adhere with the agreed timetabled and designated route in accordance with best practice.
Advise the school if the bus is running late for any reason.
Take instructions only from the school in relation to route/timetable changes.
Provide written advice of inappropriate behaviour by students while travelling.
Provide bus transport for students.
Liaise with BVS Transport coordinator (Assistant Principal)
Bus headquarters/bus staff to notify school of emergencies and/or breakdowns, and school to notify parents.
Ensure drivers and supervisors participate in training sessions required by the Department from time to time. This may include school-run sessions at the start of each year and if requested at other mutually agreed times.
Ensure all supervisors are qualified in first aid that includes cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). CPR requires an annual refresher course.
Ensure all bus staff are aware of code of conduct especially around interactions with parents/carers/guidelines and general guidelines such as no eating/drinking on route with students.

Driver
Follow all Transport Policy Guidelines and responsibilities.
Collect and drop off students before and after school.
Be responsible for the safety and welfare of students during travel.
Drive the bus in a safe and careful manner, including in the BVS bus bay area.
In the BVS bus bay, follow the directions of the designated marshals, including parking where directed.
Assist with the supervision of students.
Assist to load and unload students ensuring seat belts and harnesses are securely fixed and wheelchairs buckled in securely.
Read the daily school bus information sheet for changes to transport arrangements –information sheet is handed out by BVS staff to chaperone/driver at the end of each day.
Ensure that while loading and unloading students all safety precautions are adhered to, i.e. brakes applied to wheelchairs and safety straps (if fitted) to be secured.
After loading students on bus, a 2-person check should be carried out to ensure that all students are secured correctly before transporting.
Report any faulty equipment to the Bus Company and school.
If bus is going to be late (e.g. due to breakdown/change of route required due to roadwork or changes to drop off order) contact bus headquarters who will inform school, school will inform parents.
In conjunction with the Supervisor, use the supplied Electronic Manifest to mark students on and off the bus.

Supervisor
Follow all Transport Policy Guidelines and responsibilities.
Maintain safety and welfare of students:
-seat belts and harnesses securely fixed
-wheelchairs buckled in securely
-chaperone to monitor students for breathing difficulties, seizures,
-ensure that students are comfortable
-provide basic emotional care of students
Assist students on and off bus.
Assist with mobility of non-ambulant students.
Discuss any issues arising with appropriate staff e.g. behaviour, readiness at bus times. Be mindful of confidentiality, respect for and dignity of students.
Report any accidents / uncommon behaviours / seizures to staff.
Chaperones are not expected to collect students from the door. Students should be brought out to the bus by the parent / carer.
Monitor the school bus daily information handout for changes to transport arrangements – changes to transport arrangements will be handed out by BVS staff to chaperone/driver at the end of each day.
After loading students on bus, a 2-person check should be carried out to ensure that all students are secured correctly before transporting.
Report any faulty equipment to the Bus Company and school.

If bus is going to be late (e.g. due to breakdown/change of route required due to roadwork or changes to drop off order) contact bus headquarters who will notify school, school will inform parents.
Do a walkthrough of the bus after all students have disembarked and before leaving the school grounds each morning. BVS marshals will confirm this check has been done before allowing buses to leave.
In conjunction with the Driver, use the supplied Electronic Manifest to mark student on and off the bus.

School
Ensure all students are deemed suitable for travel, and have an Individual Student Transport Plan
Coordinate the transport of all students to and from school liaising with the bus companies, DET and parents/carers.
Ensure home and emergency contact numbers and any additional information regarding special requirements are provided for each student to the relevant bus staff.
Update passenger details regularly, including informing bus staff of daily changes via electronic manifest as well as an information sheet, and notifying the bus companies of new and existing students.
Provide the bus companies and parents with a copy of the policy including emergency procedures.
Ensure appropriate staff members are there to supervise the loading and unloading of students at the agreed times.
Liaise re loading and unloading of students at BVS.
Provide a written request of any changes to the timetable or route within a reasonable time frame.
Ensure that parents are aware of their roles and responsibilities in respect to drop off and pick up and the procedures to be followed if they are not there to meet their child.
Ensure that reported incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with in an appropriate manner and the bus companies are informed where appropriate.
Attend to issues that may arise regarding transport in a timely manner.
Provide tissues and gloves as needed.
In liaison with the bus companies and parents coordinate appropriate seats, harnesses, belts, buckle guards to support safe travel for individual students.
In case of emergency/breakdown, school will inform parents.
Bus chaperones will do a walkthrough of the bus after all students have disembarked and before leaving the school grounds each morning. BVS marshals will confirm this check has been done before allowing buses to leave.
Advise bus staff of any prevalent medical conditions/contagious illnesses which may affect bus travel.

Parents/Carers
Provide up-to-date contact details including home and emergency phone numbers, and medical information.
Have students ready at designated times, within 15 minutes of scheduled times.
Ensure that you are at home 15 minutes prior to the designated drop off time.
Take children to the bus and collect children from the bus.
If meeting bus at pick up/drop off points – be there 10 mins before scheduled time; in morning, remain with the child until the bus arrives.
Notify the bus company if students do not need to be picked up in the morning.
Notify the school of respite changes and travel changes.
No food should be consumed on the buses. Please ensure that breakfast is completed before bus arrival.
If your child travels in a wheelchair, ensure that all straps are secured before getting on bus.
Provide specialised safety equipment as required e.g. seat buckle guards.
Ensure that luggage is named clearly and only send small bags on bus (larger bags must be taken directly to respite and cannot come in on the bus).
Provide emergency contacts for the school when child is in respite care and parents are on holiday.
Parents/Carers are not permitted to travel on buses.
If a parent/carer fails to meet the bus, the student will remain on the bus and the school will be notified – the school will then attempt to arrange for alternative collection of the student from the bus. It may be necessary for the student to stay on the bus for the entire run.

Students
Follow the BVS Bus Rules

Safe Travel Guidelines:
Student medical and wellbeing requirements

All students must be fit to travel on the bus.
In the event that a child with a medical action plan is unwell, bus staff are to follow the action plan supplied by the school and implement such treatment as they are able.

Student Behaviour
Schools must ensure students display appropriate behaviour on Department transport services to ensure their own and others safety, and to provide a safe workplace for bus staff. Schools will work with bus staff and parents/carers to support safe transport for all.
The rules for the bus support our school wide behavioural expectations
The school, working with the bus company have the right to exclude a student from bus travel where that student is deemed to pose a threat to the safety of the driver, the supervisor, other students or him/herself.

Unacceptable behaviour will be managed in the following way:
The bus supervisor will make a report to the school, calling en route if necessary. A written report will be given to BVS Assistant Principal/Leading ES with responsibility for Student Transport.
DET and School procedures will be followed when reports are made. The school will inform parents/carer/guardian of the incident, and relevant BVS staff e.g. class teacher. Strategies and consequences will be applied. The severity of the consequence will relate to the seriousness of the behaviour.
Parents will be notified by the school of serious incidents on the bus. Serious incidents may put a student at risk of being suspended from the bus.
If the behaviour poses a serious risk to the student, other students or bus staff, a Student Support Group meeting will be called, involving BVS staff and parents/carers/guardians. The bus company will be informed of the meeting and given the opportunity to send a representative.
If the behaviour doesn't improve, the student may be suspended from bus travel for a period of time determined by the school team.
The decision to remove a student from the bus may be made by the school administration in consultation with the bus company management.
If a student is suspended from bus travel three times in a calendar year, he or she may be excluded indefinitely.
It may be necessary to fast track straight to the final consequence if the behaviour is sufficiently serious to warrant such measures.
BVS Assistant Principal with responsibility for Student Transport will ensure appropriate records are kept and facilitate communication between all parties. Open communication and a shared commitment between the school, the bus company and the parents of the student will ensure that every effort is made to address the issue/s before the student is removed from the transport service.
In the face of immediate and significant risk to bus staff and other students the bus driver or supervisor may require that a student leave the bus en route. In the event that this occurs the bus supervisor will consult with the school and contact the parents to request that they come and collect the child from the bus. If this is not deemed the safest option, then the student should be returned to school, or taken straight home, whichever is closest. This could result in that particular service being delayed, but every effort will be made to ensure that student removed from the bus is safe. Where incidents cause significant delay, the bus staff will contact the school who will then contact all of the parents/carers/guardians of the other students. In all incidents the school should be advised as soon as practicably possible.
A conveyance allowance may be available for families of students permanently removed from bus services.

Safety Restraints
Individual students may be required to have child safety restraints to support their safe travel to and from school. Such restraints which may include special seats, safety buckle guards and special needs harnesses are recommended by the Occupational Therapists who will follow therapeutic procedures.
Any equipment required to support the safe transport of a student to and from school by a vehicle will be requested through a formal application process. The process will show that due care was taken in making the recommendation for the identified equipment.
Restraints are to be worn appropriately and at all times.
They are only to be used for the child they are prescribed for.
A record of recommendations and actions will also be kept in the student's school file. This will be maintained and updated as and when the student's restraint system needs change and reviewed regularly.

Parents/guardians/carers should provide suitable equipment to meet their child's safe travel needs.
Staff, parents/carers and bus staff will be provided with instruction in the safe use of the restraints. Bus staff must be trained in the correct procedures for securing restraints properly on the bus and releasing them in an emergency.

Wheelchair procedures
To enhance safety and accessibility, mobility aids need to address basic specifications as required by Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002.
Bus staff must be trained in the correct procedures for securing wheelchairs appropriately.
Chairs must be approved for travel by the Occupational Therapist.
If a wheelchair user is able to leave the chair and board and leave the bus unaided (or with the help of a friend or carer), travel is permitted on buses that have stepped entry, provided that the wheelchair is folded and stowed so as to avoid impeding, or causing undue inconvenience to, travellers entering and leaving the bus.
An occupied wheelchair must be placed in the designated space in the bus, should be facing forwards, brakes on. It must not be placed in the aisle or in any other location that interferes with the entry or exit of travellers.
The restraint device or strap in the bus provided for securing occupied wheelchairs must be used.
It is crucial that wheelchairs are fastened to the floor of the bus and that the student is fastened in the wheelchair.
Students in wheelchairs should be loaded/unloaded facing away from the bus, unless individual plan is in place.
Wheelchair brakes should be on.
Bus staff must use the yellow safety bars in those buses where they are fitted.
Loading/unloading procedures in BVS bus area must be followed.

Barwon Valley School Bus EMERGENCY Procedures 2024

*An emergency is defined as **any sudden event which endangers or threatens to endanger the safety or health of any person** or threatens to destroy or damage property or endangers or threatens to endanger the environment or an element of the environment in Victoria. For example, bus accident, bushfire, flood, prolonged student seizure, extreme student ill health.*

Emergency Phone Numbers

Police	000
Fire	000
Ambulance	000
Barwon Valley School Administration	5243 1813
Kris Angelovski	0414518175
School Bus Coordinator – Gail Boadle	0419104908
School Principal – Anne Hume	0433 118 007
DET Regional Emergency Management Officer	5337 8429
DET 24-hour Emergency & Security Management Unit	9589 6266
McHarry's (phone or radio BASE)	5223 2111
Reilly's (phone)	5272 3222

In the event that a bus passenger requires urgent medical attention:

- The bus driver should act to immediately request an ambulance if the situation is serious, life threatening or it is warranted in the circumstances.
- Contact the bus company, and the school principal.
- When it is safe to do so, the bus should resume its normal route.

Procedure for Reporting Emergencies

ANY EMERGENCY MUST BE REPORTED TO:

1. The relevant emergency service.
2. The bus company.
3. The School Principal or School Bus Coordinator

The Report should include:

- The location and nature of the incident
- The time the incident occurred.
- The number and names of people involved.
- The emergency services which have been advised and their follow up action.
- The name and telephone number of the person reporting the accident.

The principal should report the emergency situation to
The Emergency & Security Management unit on 95896266.

If the school cannot be contacted,
then the Emergency & Security management Unit is to be notified
on 95896266
(messages are not to be left on answering machines)

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, the relevant Emergency Services and the bus company & school must be contacted immediately. The school will notify parents and the Emergency and Security Management Unit of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The Department defines an emergency as an event, actual or imminent, on or off site, which endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment and requires a significant and coordinated response.

A checklist will be located in each bus clearly outlining the responsibilities of the driver and the bus chaperone in the event of an emergency. It will include instructions for notifying emergency services and emergency telephone numbers for DET, the emergency services, the school and the DET Regional Emergency Management Officer.

Parents will be notified at the start of each school year about these arrangements, including arrangements for communicating emergency information to them.

Emergency Management

Extreme weather event

When a warning is issued by DET these guidelines are to be followed in the event of a rapid onset emergency or advance warning emergency e.g. bushfire, flood, severe storms.

24 hr Advance warning

Buses will not operate in an emergency affected zone, on days where a code Red is called. School bus services through these zones will be cancelled in full; no route will be shortened, modified or rerouted.

Advance warning on the day

Buses travelling through affected zones will not leave the school. No route will be shortened, modified or rerouted without direction from DET Emergency Management.
All students will remain at the school and BVS staff will remain responsible for the safety and supervision of their students during the emergency. No student will be left unsupervised, and staff will ensure that all students are accounted for. Student welfare will be the primary concern.
BVS will follow directions from DET Emergency Management regarding students being picked up by parents or going on changed bus routes (if approved).

Rapid onset (bus already on route)

School bus coordinator/principal will liaise with DET and Bus Company.
Bus staff are to follow directions given by Bus Company and school, and/or emergency services.
This may include:

- Not driving through danger areas
- Re-routing bus if approved.
- Transporting students to a designated safe area
- Keeping students on board bus until directed to take them back to school or home.

Students are not to be dismissed or released to a parent or other adult without the specific authority of the BVS Principal Class Safety Officer. To avoid traffic congestion, confusion, unsafe practices and panic, it is advisable that parents avoid coming to the bus/school until directed to do so by BVS Principal Class/DET Emergency Management. BVS Principal Class will be responsible for notifying parents and responding to enquiries as are deemed necessary. The bus mobile phone is to be used for communications with the Bus Company, school and/or emergency services only. Parents will be asked to restrict or avoid calls to the bus during the emergency and are requested to ring the school. Also, during incidents some phone services may be inoperable, and the principal and several senior staff members will have mobile phones that will be used if required to communicate with the bus staff. Bus staff are advised to keep phones charged at all times.
If students are evacuated from the bus, they will be taken to a designated emergency assembly area as advised by the Emergency Services controller.

In the event of a breakdown
The school and bus company should be notified immediately in event of a breakdown or the bus experiencing mechanical difficulties e.g. with hoists.
If bus is going to be very late (e.g. due to breakdown/change of route required due to roadwork or changes to drop off order) contact the school, who will then contact parents.
Parents will be notified of the expected delay and will be given the option of collecting their child or waiting for a replacement bus.
Arrangements will be made to enable students to continue their journey as quickly and safely as possible.
Any changes to runs due to a bus breakdown will be kept to a minimum.

Sudden student illness, abnormal seizure, or incident on the bus
In the event that a bus passenger requires urgent medical attention:

- The bus driver should act to immediately request an ambulance if the situation is serious, life threatening or it is warranted in the circumstances.
- Contact the bus company, and the school principal and
- When it is safe to do so, the bus should resume its normal route.

Using emergency information, bus staff will notify the Bus Company and school.
Bus staff will make the decision as to whether an ambulance is needed.
Bus staff will ensure ambulance staff are given emergency information, and that where possible the student is accompanied to hospital (depending on location it may be a parent or school staff member)

Aggressive or violent behaviour on route
The driver will stop the bus and the supervisor will ensure the safety of other students (with the driver's assistance if required). The school will be notified immediately, and assistance will be sent. Emergency assistance (police or ambulance) will be sought if help from school is unavailable.
Accident
Bus staff will notify the bus company who should notify the school and the Department of Education on 9589 6266. Bus staff will follow same Emergency Procedure as for illness or seizure.

Procedure for Reporting Emergencies

Any emergency must be reported to:

The relevant emergency service.
The bus company.
School Bus Coordinator and/or the School Principal

The principal should report the emergency situation to the Emergency & Security Management unit on 95896266.

If the school cannot be contacted, then the Emergency & Security Management Unit is to be notified on 95896266 (messages are not to be left on answering machines)

The Report should include:
The location and nature of the incident
The time the incident occurred.
The number and names of people involved.
The emergency services which have been advised and their follow up action.
The name and telephone number of the person reporting the accident.

Supporting those affected by emergency situations.
The principal will organise a Recovery Management Group to support staff or students who have been traumatised or are likely to suffer long term effects as a result of exposure to the emergency.
The group will include Department support personnel such as Network Psychologists, Social Workers and external consultants who may be engaged by the DET if necessary.

The safety and wellbeing of every student at this school remains our highest priority.
The Emergency Services are aware of our policy and procedures.

Barwon Valley School - Unloading and Loading of students from Student Transport Buses

General Guidelines
These guidelines have been developed to manage loading/unloading of students as safely and as efficiently as possible. All staff are expected to be familiar with the guidelines and follow the procedures unless directed otherwise by staff in charge of bus bay.

Bus bay marshals
The BVS bus marshals or their delegates will be on duty, wearing orange vests and will be in charge of the bus bay at loading and unloading times. One of these staff will be the lead marshal.
All directions and instructions given by marshals must be followed. Marshals are there to supervise traffic and oversee safety in the bus bay and are not required to assist with loading and unloading of students.
When bus hoists are in use, no one is to pass unless the hoist is lowered to the ground or folded away.
No student is to be in the bus bay unaccompanied.
Bus chaperones will do a walkthrough of the bus after all students have disembarked and before leaving the school grounds each morning. BVS marshals will confirm this check by marking each bus roll has been done before allowing buses to leave.

Unloading students in the morning
All staff are to assist with unloading mobile students on arrival in the morning (unless student has specific staff collecting them).
Students are to go to their classrooms through the nearest gate, door and/or and their own courtyards, unless other arrangements have been put in place and approved by the bus marshals or the Assistant Principal.

Unloading mobile students
No students are to get off the bus unless directed to do so by bus staff.
Nominated students can unload first, followed by all other mobile students.
Individual staff are only to collect manageable numbers e.g. no more than 2-3
Where possible, when collecting students from several buses, the students furthest from school entrances should be collected first. Do not unload students on a bus close to school entrance points and then walk them around the bus bay – this just adds to congestion.
Teachers must collect their students from the closest bus and return to the classroom.
ESs must unload their students and take them to the classroom (Staff should negotiate between units if they share students on a bus)

Unloading students in wheelchairs
Once all mobile students are unloaded from a bus the students in wheelchairs can begin to be unloaded
If a student in a wheelchair is being unloaded from a bus and for some reason there are mobile students needing to walk past the walkers must stop, or the hoist must be folded away or lowered to the ground.

Loading students in the afternoon
All students in wheelchairs or who use a walking frame must be loaded first at 3.05 pm.
Nominated mobile students with permission from the Bus marshals or the Assistant Principal can load at 3.10.
All other students are to leave their classrooms for the bus when the bell has rung.

Wet Weather arrangements
These arrangements will only be used on days of heavy rain. A fluoro flag will be displayed at the bus gate at school to indicate wet weather loading is taking place.

An announcement at school will be made on days when wet weather arrangements are required. All students are to wait inside until loading for their bus is announced.

BVS will communicate with McHarry's Office on 5223 2111 as soon as the decision has been made (Service Delivery will radio to drivers).

Loading
The four smaller non wheelchair buses (Runs 4, 8, 9, & 11) will wait in Stephen St until the wheelchair buses have loaded and departed.
The seven wheelchair buses (including Reilly's bus) will load in two waves in the undercover area. First buses in load first. Second wave buses can wait in the loop and reposition if they need to

Unloading
All buses will unload ON THE SHELTERED SIDE OF THE BUS BAY.
ALL STAFF SHOULD HELP UNLOAD ALL STUDENTS FROM EACH BUS.
Unloading of buses will be staggered to allow buses to unload before others come in to the sheltered area. Front buses will be unloaded first before others pull in.
Mobile students will unload first, followed by students in wheelchairs.

Student Transport Policy Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle, or whenever a significant change in bus operations occurs.

Policy last review date	February 2024
Policy approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	February 2027